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Bucharest City

The Bucharest City People's Council, after electing its presiding officers, its executive committee of 19 members, and its 13 permanent committees, heard the report of the outgoing executive committee. The person who read the report claimed that in 1953 the plan for consumer goods had been 120 percent fulfilled. This represents over twice the amount produced the preceding year. In the last quarter of 1953 consumer goods reached 49 percent of total local production. New constructions include a chemical plant; a plant for making potash from ashes; a factory producing cotton padding, rope, and quilt; a factory for making toys out of wood scrap; and an ice plant with a 2,000 block daily output. State stores sold 42 percent more bread, 11 percent more meat, 39 percent more candy and jam, and 28 percent more edible pastes in 1953 than in 1952. The supply of rationed products was good and full rations of bread, meat, oil, sugar, soap, and edible pastes were available in 1953. Large amounts of sugar and oil were supplied to the free market. In the last quarter of 1953 the supply of sausages, salt fish, margarine, rice, candy, edible pastes, flour, and corn meal was increased. Among manufactured goods, 65 percent more cotton, 70 percent more wool, 85 percent more silk fabrics, 80 percent more knitted goods, 90 percent more garments, and 97 percent more shoes were sold in 1953 than in the preceding year.

Distribution of larger quantities of goods was greatly helped by the opening of 402 new stores in the 23 August, Damaroia, Ferentari, Militari, Herastrau, and other sections of the city; and of two open-air markets in the 23 August and Pursor sections.

In spite of these successes there were serious shortcomings in the work of the Bucharest Executive Committee. The production of artisans cooperatives was inadequate owing to lack of encouragement by the authorities. State farms actually delivered only 46 percent of the amounts of vegetables contracted for, and the state was therefore unable to exert sufficient pressure on market prices. There was a shortage of winter vegetables such as potatoes, onions, and beans; in addition, distribution was very uneven. The citizens also suffered from a fuel and coal shortage owing to inadequate deliveries by the respective ministries. Here too distribution was defective, part of the staff was uncooperative, and delivery service to private homes very poorly organized.

Numerous deputies complained that the report was incomplete and not sufficiently self-critical. They submitted various proposals for the improvement of food supplies and for an increase in consumer goods production. These were incorporated in the adopted decision. Special stress was laid on the need for more truck gardens and more livestock raising within the city limits.

The meeting ended with a speech by Constanta Craciun, chairman of the presidium, who assured her listeners that fulfillment of the adopted decision would mean a great step forward on the road outlined by the Central Committee of the party on 18-19 August 1953. (C)

Iasi Regiune

The Iasi Regiune People's Council held its first meeting on 12 January 1954. The credentials committee confirmed the fact that the 99 candidates of the People's Democratic Front had been duly elected by the 451,000 recorded votes. Thereupon, on motion of a committee from among the deputies, the 19 members of the executive committee were elected unanimously, as provided by people's councils' rules. The new executive committee includes men and women, Rumanians and members of the national minorities, factory workers and peasants, scientists and intellectuals with close ties to the people, and activists belonging to the party and state apparatus and to mass organizations.

The people's council then proceeded to elect the members of the nine permanent committees, and to review the activities of the outgoing executive committee.

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It appeared that the former committee had achieved successes in the economic and cultural fields. For example, 55 local enterprises producing 86 different items had been set up in the last 3 years; and the regiune's 248 collective farms and TOZ (farming associations), comprising over 13,800 families, had had abundant harvests. Individual farmers, too, had had good harvests, thanks to assistance from the state and the party. In the cultural field there had also been progress. In Iasi Regiune, there are now 1,225 schools and 24 faculties /higher educational departments, schools, and colleges/ with 112,545 pupils and students; there are furthermore 881 cultural centers and reading rooms, 985 libraries, and 5 cultural institutes. Village cultural centers are now equipped with 46 motion picture projectors and 486 radios.

The deputies, not content with a simple enumeration of achievements, went on to analyze the shortcomings of the old council in order to provide the new council with the necessary guidance. It was thus ascertained that the outgoing council had failed to keep adequate contact with the masses and at times had been indifferent to suggestions. Since it had been ignorant of true conditions in communes and raions, it had frequently failed to solve their problems. Some deputies were partly responsible for these conditions, for they had neglected to keep in close contact with executive committees and had not taken part in the activities of permanent committees.

The situation in the field of compulsory deliveries started a lively discussion, particularly since Iasi Regiune is at the bottom of the list in deliveries. It was finally agreed that the old executive committee and the collecting agency were equally to blame for this situation. Their general attitude of indifference, superficiality, tolerance of errors, and consequent ignorance of progress in the field of compulsory collections, were sharply criticized. Close supervision would have permitted the timely correction of many mistakes. Their lack of contact with the collection agents led to all kinds of errors and abuses benefiting backward elements, and preventing the exposure of corrupt and hostile forces.

The decision which was finally adopted in the light of these criticisms makes collection of agricultural products the main concern of the Iasi Regiune People's Council. Collections are to be checked twice a week, mass political work among the peasants is to be intensified, collectives are to be formed to help the collectors and the people's councils in this work, etc.

The executive committee of the Iasi People's Council met for the first time on the same day [12 January], and after electing its presiding officers adopted a program of activities in accordance with the directives given by the Central Committee in August 1953. At the head of the list are compulsory collections, followed by contracts for the acquisition of fattened livestock, tax collection fulfillment of the lumber and firewood transportation plan, development of local resources, the spring seeding campaign, support for collective farms and TOZ, carrying out the plan for increased livestock production, and intensification of city and raion people's council activities.(2)

Barlad Regiune

The people's council of Barlad Regiune is composed of 79 deputies who received 330,707 votes. At its first meeting, Nicolae Trocan, chairman of the outgoing executive committee, was proposed for re-election. His qualifications were listed by a number of speakers as follows: energetic, a good organizer, has business ability, helps his comrades, and makes every effort to improve living and cultural standards of the people as ordered by government and party. However it was also pointed out that he should work in a more collective spirit and lay more stress on meetings, but reduce the excessive number.

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Deputy Nistor Botezatu presented the report on compulsory collections. Various speakers protested that the report was not critical and selfcritical enough in explaining why a number of communes and raions had not fulfilled the plan. The debates showed that failure to fulfill the plan was due to the fact that the executive committees had worked in isolation and had failed to enlist the co-operation of mass organizations. Failure of people's council members to inspect the collecting apparatus personally, insufficient training of communal collectors, and weak agitation work have been contributory causes.

The deputies were not content with mere criticism. They framed a concrete decision to ensure the successful fulfillment of the compulsory collection plan for Barlad Regiune.(3)

Bacau Regiune

Collections were unsatisfactory in Bacau Regiune. One deputy complained that in some communes delivery receipt stubs had been lost and the peasants were assessed twice. In Pastraveni Commune the cultivation plan was changed after the peasants had been assessed.(4)

Bucuresti Regiune

Although grain collections in general were satisfactory, the plan for the entire regiune was not fulfilled in 1953. Toleration of kulak maneuvers aimed at sabotaging collections was a shortcoming of many village executive committees not adequately supervised by the regiune committee. In many places collectors seemed to lack a sense of duty. Thus a collector in Cosoba Commune was constantly away hunting, while others showed favoritism toward kulaks. Collection center personnel were also frequently to blame. In one place 20 peasants were waiting to deliver their grain but the manager was nowhere to be found. Other centers did not pay for the grain on time or failed to keep accurate records.(4)

Craiova Regiune

The report on compulsory collections was read by Maria Tuntu. She revealed that the plan had not been fulfilled. It was decided to study the methods employed in Cujmir and Amaradia Raions where the plans had been fulfilled and to generalize their application in 1954.(5)

Galati Regiune

Owing to unsatisfactory work on the part of the outgoing executive committee collection was far below plan in many raions. Notable exceptions were Braila and Insuratei.(6)

Hunedoara Regiune

The first meeting of the Hunedoara Regiune People's Council opened with the formality of confirming the 79 deputies elected on 20 December. Thereupon 19 deputies to the executive committee and the members of ~~the~~ permanent committees were elected.

Deputy Dumitru Dejeu revealed in his report on the activity of the outgoing executive committee that the collection plan had not been fulfilled, although the grain harvest had been good. Collection of the grain had reached only 78-99 percent. Those responsible were former vice-chairmen Vasile Grama and Vasile Supureanu, who had neglected mass organizational work and had not given sufficient guidance to the collection agents. This explained how Ioan Popa, chief regiune collector, had been able to forward inaccurate progress reports.

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Many deputies pointed out other shortcomings in the collection field, such as the fact that in many communes allotments had been fixed bureaucratically without taking the cultivation plan into account. In its final decision, the people's council entrusted the new executive committee with the task of enlightening the peasants more fully on their obligations and instructing the collectors properly.

(3)

Oradea Regiune

Debates of the regiune people's council revealed many shortcomings on the part of the outgoing executive committee and led to excellent suggestions for the increase of agricultural production. The wheat collection plan was fulfilled 102 percent, but the plan for corn and many other products was not fulfilled. This situation resulted from insufficient mass political work and from errors committed by the chief regiune agent, Gh. Pinteau, who has since been dismissed for neglect of duty. Another deputy blamed Pavel Madura, former vice-chairman and chief of the agricultural section, who was active in furthering planting but showed no interest in compulsory collections. Iosif Biro, the other vice-chairman, had not even bothered to read the reports of delegates sent to make on-the-spot investigations.

It was also brought out that the executive committee had turned down offers of assistance on the part of mass organizations for fear the latter would ask for means of transportation. (5)

Ploesti Regiune

The names of deputies proposed for membership in the executive committee stirred and led to discussions. Dumitru Grossu was praised for his good work, but also reminded that he should answer complaints more expeditiously. Ion Dragulescu was warned that he should be more on the alert against hostile elements. Moise Iordache, chairman of Ploesti City Executive Committee was told that he should pay more attention to supplying the needs of the population. However all deputies proposed were elected unanimously.

The report on collections revealed that 121 communes and 71 collective farms had fulfilled their quotas, but that nevertheless total collections had been unsatisfactory. Responsibility was as usual divided between executive committees and collectors. The only member of the permanent committee on collections who had shown any activity at all was its chairman. In Pucioasa, Campina, and Cricov communes serious faults were committed in the matter of carrying out the correct class policy. In some communes the deputies themselves had set a bad example by being late with their deliveries. In Urziceni, Buzau, and Pogoanele communes, quotas were assigned several months late.

Owing to its bureaucratic methods and spirit, the State Collection Agency failed to do its job despite its large number of personnel.

One remedial step decided upon was that in the future collectors and raion supervisors should make daily reports to the people's councils (7)

General

The lessons learned from the experience of 3 years of people's council activity are summed up editorially by Romania Libera as follows: In the newly elected councils, the members of permanent committees have been selected on the basis of their special training and competence. This should enable them to act as real study and supervisory organs, in a position to contribute effectively to the work of the executive committees.

The 6,600 citizens' committees, with 40,500 members, formed around the people's councils in 1953, have proved to be among the strongest links with the masses. They have succeeded in enlisting the active assistance of hundreds of thousands of working people for the improvement of city and village administrations, and their role must be greatly expanded in the future.

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Reports to the voters must be made regularly, as they will be very useful in helping the executive committees to take the necessary steps to increase the amount of consumer goods available to the people.

In the last few months, a new form of liaison between the people's councils and the masses has been tried, in the form of women's committees. More than 350,000 women were active in these committees and in women's delegate meetings. Their work has been very effective and this movement must be expanded to the utmost.

The complex problem facing people's councils can only be satisfactorily solved if an ever increasing number of citizens actively assist the local organs of state authority.(8)

SOURCES

1. Romania Libera, 7 Jan 54
2. Ibid., 12 Jan 54
3. Ibid., 14 Jan 54
4. Ibid., 13 Jan 54
5. Ibid., 15 Jan 54
6. Ibid., 16 Jan 54
7. Ibid., 17 Jan 54
8. Ibid., 28 Jan 54

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